We take this opportunity of notifying to our Subscribers that a Title-page and Index will be given in our next number, with the completion of the volume.

THE BUILDER,

NO. XLVI.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1843.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

It is due to the writer of the following paper that we give insertion to his strictures on Sir Robert Smirke's design, and also on that of our correspondent "G. R. F.," but as we cannot bring some of our friends entirely into that way of discussing points of difference which we think it desirable should prevail in a work devoted to a liberal art, and as we are responsible for the conduct of matters in something like a becoming spirit, we must take the liberty of accompanying his letter by such remarks of our own as appear necessary. We detect in the handwriting one who has displayed not a little of industry and anxiety in former communications on the same and other subjects, and therefore we say it is due to him that he have what he requires at his setting out.

"X. X." is evidently a professional man, and though all carelessness and blundering is to be deprecated, and is a drawback on the most excellent design, yet it is a drawback of a mechanical nature, and one that we should little expect to be dwelt upon by an educated critic addressing himself to the merits of the design itself. We are not surprised at such things among competition committees, and with people uneducated in the spirit of art, who bring their eye, or a quizzing-glass, to bear upon the detail of a drawing, and exclaim on its prettiness, or ugliness, as it may strike them; while the more profound observer is intent upon canvassing the matter really at issue, and brings his mind last, if at all, to that which engages the buzzing superficials that stand around.

Such criticism as "X. X." indulges in concerning the rudeness of execution of the cut are of the class we mention, and is like the conduct of a man who having the draft of an important deed to peruse, should begin with an examination of and remarks upon the penmanship. As we have observed before, bad criticism is as much our abhorrence as bad designs, and it too frequently happens that the mere critic is one altogether unskilled in the practice of the matter he criticises. What "X. X." has to say concerning the omission of windows and other apertures is more to the point, and involves some of the worthier matter of discussion in such a design; but it is principally important in order that we may know how the author of the design will acquit himself in that which it is clear requires the exercise of invention, judgment, and correct artistic feeling. All architects know how the light was thrown into their temples by the Greeks, but then the circumstances vary largely here, both as to the appropriation of the structure, the climate, the quality, and quantity of light, and the medium by which it is admitted. We are not of those who think that a columnar structure of the class chosen by our correspondent "G. R. F." is essentially and inseparably associated with peculiar rites of worship, and those *Pagan*, as it is the *slang* to say, any more than we consider a buttressed pile applicable to nothing but the worship of our higher and purer dispensation; therefore we hold that there is no objection to be premised on these or the like grounds; but it is certainly required that we should be made acquainted with the character of the "windows or other apertures" by which "G. R. F." would serve his edifice, and so that we may judge of the admissibility of his design in the respects of humanity and fitness, as well as of extrinsic beauty and nobleness.

We apprehend that great part of the objections of "X. X." will fall to the ground, and that he would himself have perceived it if he had been as anxious for truth as for conquest. It is quite clear that "G. R. F." never intended to make his wings into official residences, but to apply them (more honourable, and therefore, in our mind, more appropriate purposes) as forming the principal front or façade of a national edifice. This, to our view, is the besetting defect of Sir Robert Smirke's design. He brings parlours and bedrooms, or apartments of similar inferior purpose and distinction, where they should by no means be made to appear. A step farther in his inconsistency, and the kitchens and scalleries might have been *conveniently* placed under the central portico, with equally *convenient* approaches and provision for the butcher and baker and dustman. We may with as much reason might these have been exhibited as the trustee's parlours, and defended on the same ground, their forming indispensable parts of the same edifice.

"G. R. F.," however, should have stated to what purpose he would appropriate these two columnar piles, and how he would secure that unity or individuality of expression in his structure which this duality of apparently independent edifices seems to be opposed to; he should state, also, whether the colonnades are for use or for show; if the former, it is as much in place as the cloister or ambulatory of a conventual pile, and requires as few words to defend its adoption; if the latter only, it is indefensible, as would be the appropriation of those features in Gothic art to a common parish or village church.

"X. X.'s" reasoning, therefore, although it may not apply to this design, may pass, forasmuch as it is worth—and it is worth something as enumerating a general principle; it will apply to many other and executed designs, even with more force than to the houses in Park-crescent.

As detecting another error of the mechanical class, the remark on the nine-columned portico (not seven, as the term heptastyle implies) is of force, but it is clear that this is an error of the hand, not of the mind, an octastyle and decastyle portico are equally and palpably applicable. The last remarks of "X. X." on this subject, omitting, as we have chosen to do, other personal and out of the way matter (to which we have our answer), is with reference to our, we trust, conscientious dealing with the question. Surely it was competent in us to call attention to what had been said on all sides, whether of the Museum or its architects, and we may confess to having been influenced by it in a slight degree, as it bore with the weight of authority in this or that direction, and as it came before us; but we reserved and acted upon the most dispassionate judgment we could command the exercise of, and have no reason to repent us of our impartiality. We never asserted nor esteemed Sir Robert Smirke to be a model of human perfection, or as an architect; and this we think compatible with his well being of a "noble and generous nature."

Who has heard any thing to sully the character of Sir Robert Smirke in his relations as the trustee of his employer's interest, or his deportment towards those builders, clerks, and workmen, over whom he had been appointed to preside? If attention to his duties, professional and social, and a watchful regard of the interests of those over and under him, do not constitute a title to be regarded as a man of high character, and of a noble and generous nature, simply because he does not complete the round by some of the supererogatory virtues, then we admit that we may have made some mistake; but shall we say that "X. X." has not the *noble and the generous* in his nature, because he is a good raiser or chooses to exhibit the qualities of the cynic, in excess over his better qualities; who rails at Sir Robert for keeping his model and designs from the public eye, and commits the same fault himself by not bringing forward his own emendations, on the ground, he alleges, as influencing others in the omitted part of his paper? Sir Robert has his reasons and motives (they may be as weak as "X. X.'s") for not indulging the public in an *enlarged*, liberal, and confident spirit with the inspection of his designs; but "generous and noble natures" have their *peccadilloes*, and we are afraid Sir Robert is not singular amongst his class in his *apparent* illiberality. Who hears of so many instances to shame Sir Robert, of those who have great means of disseminating knowledge, and of giving pleasure to the public, coming forward to do so out of an enlarged and patriotic spirit? yet there are not wanting "noble and generous natures" among them, if the times and manners were more favourable. To render them such has been, and will continue to be, our aim; and we invite "X. X." and the others he mentions, who have so sensitive an appreciation of their own excellence, and of "low company," to run a little risk of their designs being damaged, to secure the greater good of their *liberal* example, not fearing that if they have any thing good to offer, it will be made apparent, even through the haze and "blur" of an indistinctness which he and others will thus aid us with the means of removing or improving upon.

SIR,—You will, perhaps, grant me a liberty you have not refused to others. Therefore, without apology, I proceed to comment on "G. R. F.'s" idea for the façade of the British Museum. He is right in calling it a *hasty sketch*, for it seems to have been the work of five minutes, without having another minute's consideration bestowed on it. In fact, he might have contented himself with his ground-plan alone, since that shews all the essential differences between his *design* and Smirke's; and the others, such as the substitution of Corinthian for Ionic, and giving pediments to the wings instead of the centre portico, would have been more advantageously expressed in words than in a most rudely drawn cut, which shews nothing but the shafts of the columns, all the rest being an indistinguishable blur, without any attempt to indicate windows or other apertures. Yet these last must have a very great influence upon the character of the elevations and the general architectural effect. Such must be more especially the case in regard to the wings, it being proposed to make them the official residences, consequently mere dwelling-houses, with at least two ranges of windows, ground-floor and first-floor, if not a second-pair floor, unless there were to be no other bed-chambers, shew what could be obtained out of the roof with concealed windows there. Now, the idea of making mere dwelling-houses of that kind, such as must plainly shew themselves to be upon a hunted and ordinary scale within, component parts of a *grand classic* public edifice is preposterous, and would prove a most clumsy attempt at disguise, reminding us of the ass in the lion's hide. Being dwelling-houses, those portions of the edifice would of course require chimneys, and I need not say that such appendages would be fatal to the temple-like outline of the pedimented roofs. Besides chimneys, there must also be areas to the basement floor, yet this circumstance seems very unaccountably to have been overlooked altogether by "G. R. F.," who, now that it is pointed out, will perceive that his colonnades to the wings must be *impracticable*, because, instead of being a walk, the space between the columns and the walls must be a sunk area; therefore, instead of there being steps, the columns ought there to be placed on a stylobate or podium of about five feet high, in order to prevent our

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